

### Introduction:

A column in March's issue of *The Atlantic* says that secularism in America is hurting politics and society. “The culture war over religious morality has somewhat faded but in its place is something much worse”. In the article title “Breaking Faith” Peter Beinart writes that in the past 10 years, Americans, particularly millennials, have grown further apart from church affiliation. But instead of secularism leading to more peace, more hostility happened and more divisive lines were created. Here are some alarming facts • 70-75% of Christian youth leave the church after high school. 70% of surveyed Protestants stopped attending church by age 23 according to Life-Way Research and 34% of those said they had not returned, even occasionally, by the age of 30. That means about one in four Protestant young people have left the church. The cultural war wages and young people don't want to be targets.

“Christians need to take a public stand with God, no matter what the cost. We need to take a stand for our faith and have the courage to say, "I'm a Christian." If we are going to have revival in this nation, that is what Christians will have to do and we will need to reach millennials to embrace the faith. It can happen we have the path to revival.

### I Conditions For Revival. Vv. 1-4

1. The Psalmist is talking about his homeland. He pleads for Divine favor and genuine revival, but the point that we must not miss is this: he was asking for revival for his land, for his country. We don't know the author or the background for this Psalm. Most scholars believe that it was written just after Judah returned from captivity in Babylon. Judah had been sent to Babylon for 70 years as punishment for their sins against the Lord. Now, they have been restored to their land, but their hearts are still not where they need to be. The nation has experienced restoration, but it stands in great need of revival.

2. We often think of the Psalm 85 as relevant to individual or church revival, and it is, but only secondarily. Primarily it was written to express a desire for national revival. This patriotic prayer song encompasses at least three conditions for national revival: God can revive us as the saints **pray**, God hears, and the heavens open, and the spirit answers with the fresh breath of Revival. We see this truth in verse one of Psalms 85: **LORD, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.**

3. The Old Testament is full of the stories of God's chosen people the Jewish nation and their relationship with their God. It tells how God would bless them and seek them, how they would reject him and turn from him and defile their relationship with him seeking other gods even ones made by themselves. But time and time again, God held back his anger, restored the

nation again to a place of prosperity and well - being after the people had turned, repented and asked forgiveness for their sins that they had committed against God.

4. We must confess that God has been favorable to our land in light of our waywardness but scriptures says, “**and the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man,**

Revival must begin with you and me! Apathy won't bring revival. Revival is something God brings when we act in obedience to God's word. The conditions must be one of **prayer**, second of **humility**- it is a key, because apart from humility, other than for religious practices, we would never even see the need to kneel in prayer before a Holy God!

5. In verse four we seen the words – “Turn us” which means in the Hebrews to bring back, refresh, restore... O God of our salvation”. True **Repentance** is best defined as a combination of the two things: "A sorrow over sin because of how it grieves God and affects others. Broken over his sin, the individual chooses to turn from his sin and turn in his heart to God." This is the third condition before revival.

True revival cannot come without repentance. We can't expect the evangelist to roll up here in his SUV and bring revival in his briefcase, or from a great sermon. If real revival comes it is going to be because the church members have got down on their knees, humble themselves and prayed and turned!

## II God's Disposition on Revival vv 5-8

1. The Psalmist understands that revival does not come from men, methods and messages; revivals come from God. A revival is a sovereign move of God among a spiritually ready people. There is a need for revival in our nation but Revival will not begin on a national level; it will begin in individual hearts and lives. Revive us again in verse 6, note the use of the word "again" it indicates a previous state of blessing and closeness with God that needs to be recovered. "Help us get back to where we once were as a nation", that is his plea. It should be our plea as well for the United States.

2. We can look back throughout church history and see the revivals that began back in the 1700's right here in New England. God was moving by His Spirit to bring revival. During the Great Awakening preachers like George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards were used by God through the Word to foster revival. This was the first great Awakening and another from 1792-1822, a third in 1830-1847 and a fourth in 1858-98 and last 1900-1915. We have since seen pockets of revival but nothing like these; we need as the psalmist asked, ‘**Ps. 85: [6] Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?**

3." If it were not for the mercy of God's who would be saved? “Shew us thy mercy” - verse 7 affirms. God has been merciful to our nation. We will not be saved by our military might.

Neither by our genius of technology; or by our great prosperity and free enterprise; as wonderful as these things are, we realized how quickly these can be lost. Mercy comes when man accepts the truth about himself and his sin. Mercy comes to a nation from a revival of the truth as well.

If it were not for God's disposition toward mercy we all would be condemned. Remember Israel, she was a backslidden nation and yet we read in Psalms 106:8 - **Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. Romans 5:9**

4. "Salvation is of the Lord." (Jonah 2:9) **Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.** Psalms 80:19 ---What about you are you saved? Are you at the point where you long for the power of God again that you may rejoice, that you may experience a deep abiding joy with God?

Maybe some of you have suffered some sort of pain, physical, mental, emotional and it has left you indifferent toward God. Don't allow these to keep you from spiritual renewal. He sees your restoration, He sees your deliverance. We might as well face it; all of us will experience a certain amount of emotional pain as we journey through this life. Jesus says that His followers will meet with suffering and heartache, but He admonishes them not to be discouraged. Earth's sorrows are meant to be stepping stones in the process of sanctification. Indeed, we "must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Don't let the difficult circumstances of keep you from revival in your soul.

### Conclusion:

The hot summer month's is no time for a trash strike. I remember such a time in 1986 when over 15,000 municipal employees went on strike in Philadelphia on July first. A stench hover over the city for days; I was driving a truck without air-conditioning.. During the weeks of the trash strike rubbish accumulated and the odor got really bad. It was pretty foul and everybody become eager for the return of the garbage trucks. It was repulsive. More repulsive than this is the personal trash that accumulates in our hearts and minds. Some of our garbage—like hatred, gossip, bitterness, lust--is obviously foul. It's time to take out the trash!

The Bible calls our inner garbage "sin." In 1 John 1:9, God's disposal system is outlined: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Are you praying for revival, both in your own life and in the lives of others?